

Iowa Outdoors

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

www.iowadnr.gov

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CAMPSITES EXPECTED TO GO FAST FOR MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

DES MOINES - Campers planning to spend Memorial Day Weekend in an Iowa State Park can reserve a campsite for a May 22 arrival starting this Sunday through the online reservation system. Campers may reserve a campsite up to three months before their first night stay.

Memorial Day Weekend is often seen as the unofficial kick-off to the summer recreation season and is one of the busiest weekends all year for Iowa State Parks. Reservable campsites with electricity generally fill within weeks after they are available for holiday weekends.

"We are looking forward to a busy year in our parks and campgrounds," said Kevin Szcodronski, chief of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources State Parks Bureau.

"We are anticipating that many families will be staying closer to home this year because of the uncertainty with the economy and that may lead to an increase in state park attendance. Historically, our parks were a major factor for recreation and relaxation in people's lives and I think we may be seeing a return to that at least in the near future."

Campsites can be reserved 24 hours a day, seven days a week at www.reserveiaparks.com or by calling the reservation center Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 1-877-IAPARKS. The call center will begin accepting reservations for May 22 arrival for Memorial Day Weekend on Feb. 23. The call center is closed on weekends and state holidays.

Half of the electric and non-electric campsites in Iowa State Parks are available for reservations and half are available on first come, first serve basis.

"We had a rough go of it last year with the storms and flooding that closed Walnut Woods and George Wyth and we are hopeful that we can get those parks open for the Memorial Day Weekend," Szcodronski said. "If we can get Walnut Woods and

George Wyth open prior to Memorial Day Weekend, we will allow camping on a first come, first serve basis.”

Szcodronski said campers wanting to stay at Lake Darling and Lake Wapello state parks in southeast Iowa should know that Lake Darling will be completely drained for the 2009 season to fix the outlet structure in the dam and to improve the habitat in the lake. Lake Wapello was lowered last year to fix a leak in the dam, to renovate the fishery and improve the in-lake habitat. Lake Wapello will be refilling this spring.

In southwest Iowa, Green Valley State Park is closed while the campground is completely renovated. The campground work includes increasing the size of the individual sites, increasing space between sites, adding rock to the camping pads and living spaces, new fire rings and increasing the electrical service to 50 amps. At least 10 of the 90 electrical sites will offer full hookups. Since the new campsites will be larger, there will be fewer non-electric sites. The schedule calls for the campsite work to be finished by mid summer.

Electric Campsites Filling for Camping Kick-off Weekend

Campers in a DNR managed Iowa State Park during Camping Kick-off Weekend, May 1, 2 and 3, will receive a gift package that includes a camping coupon good for one night of camping at an electrical site, a free issue of *Iowa Outdoors* magazine, recipes, camping tips and more in a reusable mesh trash bag. The theme for the May 1 – 3 Camping Kick-off Weekend is to be a green camper.

“We spent upwards of \$750,000 for utilities in our parks last year, so this year we are going to provide our campers with information on how they can reduce the amount of electricity and water they use in the campgrounds,” said Kevin Szcodronski, chief of the State Parks Bureau for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. “We will be encouraging the use of the reusable trash bags to collect trash around the campsite, recycle what we can, and put the rest where it goes, then keep the mesh bag for reuse.”

The State Parks Bureau is proud to partner with Keep Iowa Beautiful and the DNR’s Land Quality Bureau to provide the reusable mesh trash bags.

Media Contact: Kevin Szcodronski, chief, State Parks Bureau, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-281-8674.

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IOWA CAMP BRINGS TEEN GIRLS OUTDOORS

States looking to introduce more young women into the outdoors are turning to Iowa to learn from its successful Outdoor Journey for Girls program.

Iowa is seen as a national leader for its role in introducing 12 to 15 year old girls to the outdoors through its innovative three day program. The program began in 1993 with the purpose of offering girls a similar experience to outdoor camps already in place for boys, and so far, more than 2,000 girls have gone through the camp.

“Outdoor Journey is a great opportunity for these young ladies to try some new experiences in a supportive and fun environment,” said Joli Vollers, conservation officer with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and organizer for Outdoor Journey in Iowa. “By the time the girls leave, they have learned new skills and made some new friends, and have discovered they really can do anything.”

The three day, two night workshop was first held at Springbrook Conservation Education Center, near Guthrie Center, and taught a variety of outdoor skills, including canoeing, orienteering, fishing, archery, shooting rifles/shotguns, conservation, water safety, camping, game care, trapping, fish identification and fish cleaning and cooking.

The second day is devoted to certifying the girls in Iowa’s hunter education program. A second camp was added in 1995 at Springbrook, and a third program was added in 2007 at Black Hawk County’s Hickory Hills Park.

The 2009 camps are scheduled for June 10 to 12 at Springbrook, July 14 to 16 at Hickory Hills, and Aug. 5 to 7 at Springbrook. The July and August camps fill rather quickly so early registration is encouraged. More information is available on the Web at www.iowadnr.gov, then click on Camps and Workshops under Additional Information on navigation bar on the left side of the page. Then scroll down to OJ – Outdoor Journey for Girls.

Several states have attended Outdoor Journey in order to start similar camps in their states. It has become a model for involving new audiences in outdoor recreation and has been featured in *Newsweek* magazine and *Pheasants Forever* magazine, and across the state and country on television and in newspapers.

For information on the workshop, contact Donise Grygierczyk at 515-205-8709. In **southwest** Iowa, contact Shawnel Richter at 712-249-2844. In the **Dubuque** and **Bellevue** area, contact Stephanie Penniston at 563-340-4528. In **Waterloo**, contact Lori Eberhard at 319-269-6705. In **northwest** Iowa, contact Amy Johnson at 712-732-3096 or 712-225-1177, or Ginger Walker at 712-225-6709. In **southeast** Iowa, contact Andrea Evelsizer at 319-325-4222 or Jackie Gautsch at 319-205-8581.

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CANOE, KAYAK AND INNERTUBE RENTALS GENERATE \$5 MILLION FOR IOWA’S ECONOMY

DES MOINES - Canoe, kayak, and innertube rental businesses generate more than \$1 million in rental fees, and that generates \$4 million in related spending, according to a new survey conducted by Iowa Department of Natural Resources’ Rivers Program, in conjunction with Iowa State University’s Department of Landscape Architecture. The survey was administered as part of the water trails and low-head dam safety statewide planning process initiated by the Iowa General Assembly in 2008.

Some findings include:

- Liveries contribute \$5.14 million to Iowa's economy, with \$1.14 million in rental receipts, and an additional \$4 million for related spending (i.e., lodging, auto related, food and drink).
- Four rivers – the Upper Iowa River, the Des Moines River, the Maquoketa River, and the Iowa River – accounted for \$650,000, or 57 percent, of the total estimated receipts.
- Liveries use public accesses, and some have requested additional public services, including water trail development, law enforcement, and hazard mitigation.
- Canoeing accounted for 48 percent of the total estimated 41,713 trips per year. Innertubing accounted for 44 percent of the total trips, and kayaking accounted for 8 percent.

To view the entire report, visit <http://www.iowadnr.gov/watertrails/planning.html>

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